

INTERESTING NOTES
ON
THE EARLY HISTORY of the HORSE,
His Points and Stable Management,

BY
FREDERICK B. MOODY, M.R.C.V.S.,
(Formerly Lieutenant Royal East Kent Yeomanry Cavalry.)

AUTHOR OF
"A Sketch on Ancient and Modern Horse-Shoes
and Horse-Shoeing."

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P R E F A C E .

IN writing this Pamphlet the Author has adhered exactly to the same principles as he did in his Sketch on ANCIENT AND MODERN HORSE-SHOES AND HORSE-SHOEING. It has been in the hope of stirring up a closer feeling of friendship between man and the noblest of dumb creation, that the Author has again taken up his pen and ventured to place before the horse-loving public those facts which he feels will be of interest to them. And if, by such little works as these, he is able to bring about a firmer union between the masters, and the friends of these silent, willing, and often shamefully abused servants, he will feel that any little trouble he has taken in producing this short sketch will have been amply repaid.

“A good horse needs but one stroke,
A wise man but one word.”

Chinese Proverb.



CHAPTER I.

The Early History of the Horse.

THE very idea of being supported at ease by an auxiliary and borrowed animal power, and of being safely borne from place to place at will, with a pleasant and gentle motion, or with the rapidity of lightning, must have impressed the minds of the first discoverers of the mighty benefits, with ineffable delight. The general beauty, the harmony of proportions, the stateliness and delicacy, of the superior species of this paragon of brute animals, could not fail to inspire admiration in the breasts of even savage and untutored men. Time and the improving faculties of man have gradually developed the various uses and qualifications of the horse. Endowed by nature with a portion of intellect, with a generous pliability of disposition and fortitude of heart, with vast and energetic bodily powers, he was found capable of being a sort of social part in all the pleasures and labours of man. He was associated with his master in the pleasures of the chase, he shared willingly and with ardour in the dangers of the martial field, and with a sturdy prowess, partook in the humble labours of cultivating the soil for mutual subsistence.

“He and his horse were of a piece,
One spirit did inform them both.”

Hudibras.

In the early history of the Hebrews we read of the 600 war chariots of Pharoah, King of Egypt; and it is probable he was first used for harness purposes, and not for riding.

It is also probable that it was in Egypt, that rich and fertile country, and which abounded so much in horses in the earliest ages, that the horse was first reduced to obedience and educated for the service of man. The horses of ancient Egypt were celebrated for war, and from thence chiefly it may be presumed that King Solomon supplied his chariots and horsemen. It is probable also that the horse and art of horsemanship passed from Egypt to Greece, from Greece to Italy, and from Italy were disseminated throughout the European continent.

The Horse undoubtedly existed before the Flood, but whether he was then the servant of man, or for what purpose he was then used we do not know. There is scarcely a district in Great Britain in which fossil remains of this animal have not been discovered. The breeding of the horse was forbidden to the Israelites, and they were commanded to hamstring those that were taken in war. The Judges and even the Kings were carried on asses. The Persians were perhaps the most celebrated of any of the horses of antiquity, for beauty of form, vigour, spirit, and every rare quality which distinguishes the southern horse. They were, however, rather commended for speed than for stoutness. It was in the time of King Cyrus that Persia became very celebrated for her horses. This king granted peculiar privileges to those who possessed a certain number of horses, and in time it became ignominious for a Persian to be seen in public except on horseback. They vied with each other in the beauty of their horses, and the splendour of their clothing; so highly prized was the native Persian horse that Alexander considered one of them the noblest gift he could bestow.

Many colonies of Egyptians emigrated to Greece and took with them as many horses as their ships would contain. The first colony landed in the north of Greece about the time of the birth of Moses, and their appearance mounted on horseback caused the natives to think that they were being attacked by monsters, half-man and half-horse, and thus they called them the Centaurs. The animal and his rider appeared but one and the same body actuated by the

same vital functions, and informed by one and the same spirit.

“En-corpsed and demi-natured with the brave beast.”

The ancient writers have assigned the honour of first mounting the horse in Greece, to the Thessalians who inhabited Mount Pelion, and Pliny the elder celebrates Bellerophon as the first great horse-breaker. The earliest purpose to which horse were applied, it is affirmed, was to hunt the wild bulls, which ravaged the corn fields, and in this exercise the horsemen were armed with javelins. According to Pliny, Julius Cæsar from this ancient chase first derived the idea of those bull fights with which he annually entertained the citizens of Rome. In these early times men rode as many as four horses along the public roads, and would leap from the back of one horse to another, and fly along with them. All Arts must necessarily be rude and simple in their beginning, and so it was with the first breakers of horses. They were totally ignorant of saddles and bridles. Having, by whatever means, subdued and reconciled the horse to servitude, they taught him to obey the various sounds of the human voice, guiding, accelerating his motions, or checking his career, with a wand or switch. Although it is difficult to conceive that a high-spirited, and more particularly, an obstinate horse could be governed and controlled in such a simple way, and even in the tumult and confusion of battle, yet much must be referred to the savage resolution of the riders, and to the superior temper and docility of the Arabian and African horse. Virgil speaks of *Numidæ infræni*, or Numidians who rode without bridles; and Nemesian describes the use of the riders stick, which, by striking the horse either side of the face, directed him the contrary way, and stopped him by a stroke full upon the nose band. But even anteriorly to the use of the bridle, we must pre-suppose a knowledge of confining the horse in his place, probably by thongs or cords around his neck or head. A view of the rope hanging down the horse's neck is supposed to have suggested the first hint of traces for the draught of carriages. The ancient Greeks were not only in habitual use of the bridle, but also of spurs, but neither they nor their

imitators the Romans knew anything about saddles, they used skins of wild beasts fastened by a surcingle, these skins when used for the rich and great were frequently adorned with gold, silver, or jewels, and styled *epiphia*. The curbed bit was unknown to the ancient Greeks, they used knobs attached to the bit at the corners of the mouth, these had sharp points upon their inner surface, and by means of a twist of the bridle could be brought to bear painfully on the cheek and angles of the mouth. Neither stirrups nor any appendage of similar use, seem to have preceded the use of the saddle. In mounting the ancients usually vaulted on to the horse's back, and the soldiers used the aid of their spears. Some taught the horse to kneel for their accommodation. Persons of consequence were lifted on horseback, and assisted to dismount by their slaves or grooms. Horse-blocks were also in ancient use; and mounds of stones were piled on certain spots on the public roads. Amongst the Romans these *suppedanea*, or mounting-places, were composed of stone and wood, and were abundant upon the high roads. In trimming and dressing their horses, certain of the ancient nations were very expert, adjusting their manes in all the various modes in present use. The Armenians and Parthians trimmed their horses double-maned, by cutting the hair away in the centre, which occasioned it to divide and fall down upon each side of the neck. The manes were also *implicata*, or plated, and often decorated with ribbons. The tails were left long and nicely combed. In grooming, the Ancients instead of using the curry-comb, used a covering composed of the rough back of a palm tree, which was fastened upon the hand of the groom, and with which he rubbed and polished the coat of his horse.

The earliest record of the English horse is in the History of Julius Cæsar, and he considered the horses he found in our island so valuable that he afterwards carried many of them with him to Rome. In about A.D. 900 the value of a foal not fourteen days old was 4d, at one year and a day 48d., and at three years old 60d, it was then broken and brought up as a palfrey, and was then valued at 120d. The following Regulations were established in Dealing in Horses:—That the buyer was allowed *time* to ascertain

whether the horse he bought was free from three diseases, he was allowed three nights to prove his purchase was free from *staggers*, three months to prove soundness of his lungs, and one year to ascertain whether he was affected with *Glanders*; for every blemish discovered after the purchase one-third of the money was to be returned, except it should be a blemish of the ears or tail, which the purchaser was supposed to be capable to discover. The seller has also to warrant the horse not to tire on a journey with others, not to refuse his food from hard work, and that he would pull a load up or down hill.

Tournaments were solomnized in England in the year 1140, and about this time the side-saddle was first introduced in the country, previous to this the women rode astride like the men. These Tournaments became very important, and various parts of the Metropolis derived their names from them, for instance, *Tilt yard*, near St. James's Park, *Knight-rider street*, because the Knights passed through this street on their way to Smithfield where the Tournaments were held, and again *Gilt-spur street*, because of the splendid gilt spurs sold there. Henry I. granted the citizens of London a charter in 1101, and it stated their right to hunt as fully as their ancestors had done in Middlesex and Surrey. This charter was confirmed by Henry II., John, and Henry III. The Epping Hunt was the Hunt of the City. In 1562 the Lord Mayor, Sir William Harpur, on September 18th, with the aldermen, and masters and wardens of twelve companies hunted and killed the hare before dinner, and, after dining with the Chamberlain, hunted the fox at the end of St. Giles's. The Common Hunt frequently went much further afield, even to within three parts of the way to Tyburn; and so fond were the worthy citizens of riding west that the Lord Mayor had a banqueting house for the entertainment of his company close to the top of New Bond street. King Henry VIII. was very anxious to produce a valuable breed of horses, so he affixed a certain standard, below which no horse was to be kept; the lowest height for stallions was 15 hands, and for the mare 13 hands, so determined was he that at Michaelmastide the Magistrates were ordered to *drive* all Forests and Commons, and destroy all horses,

mares, or foals which seemed unlikely to produce a valuable breed; he also compelled every Archbishop and Duke to keep seven trotting stallions for the saddle, each of which was to be 14 hands high at three years old. It was Charles I. who first introduced the *bit* into universal use in the Cavalry Service, and ordered that no person engaged in the Cavalry Service, should in riding, use any *snaffles*, but *bits* only. It was in the latter part of the reign of Queen Anne that a Mr. Darley had recourse to the discarded and despised *Arabian*, and he selected a horse which was afterwards called the "Darley Arabian," and it is to him we are mainly indebted for a breed of horses of unequalled beauty, speed, and strength.





CHAPTER II.

The Points of the Horse.

IN a short Pamphlet like the present it is impossible for me to do *full* justice to every point of the Horse. I shall endeavour to give as much information in as brief space as possible. It has been well and truly said that beautiful as is the horse, and identified so much with our pleasure, and our profit, he has been the object of almost universal regard, and there are few persons who do not pretend to be somewhat competent judges of his *form, qualities, and worth*. There is scarcely a man who would not be offended if he were thought altogether ignorant of horse flesh, and yet, generally speaking, there are few subjects, upon which these pretended and self-sufficient judges are less capable of giving an opinion. As in modern times, persons of the most illustrious birth have ever been proud of the distinction of being patrons of the Horse, and of excelling in every branch of that science which relates to him, so it has been from the earliest antiquity. In Homer and Virgil we find the title of tamers

and breakers of horses bestowed upon the most renowned chiefs and heroes, as the highest possible commendation, and the art of horsemanship was not regarded as a mere ornamental accomplishment, but one of solid use and indispensable necessity in the great business of war. In the time of Julius Cæsar it was considered such a disgrace to be ignorant of the science of horsemanship that it gave rise to the proverb, "*Neque equitare, nec literas scire*,"—neither to be able to ride, nor to read the alphabet. According to the general verdict of the ancient Roman writers, especially Varro and Virgil, the following modifications of form are requisite in the composition of a good horse. His head should be small, his eyes clear and sparkling, his nostrils open and large, his ears placed near each other, his mane strong and full, his breast ample and broad, his shoulders flat and sloping backwards, his barrel round and compact, his loins broad and strong, his tail full and bushy, his limbs clean and compact, legs straight and even, knees round and well-knit, hoofs hard and tough, and his veins large and swelling throughout his body. In addition to these particulars, the Ancients judged it a good prognostic of a colt, if, when running at large in the pasture he was ambitious to outstrip his companions in the race, and if a river interposed, if he were the first to take it, also if in drinking he plunged his nose deep into the water. The most important service amongst the Ancients was the military, and they had various methods of trying the dispositions of horses, thereto proposed, one method was to ring a bell or make other loud and sudden noises in the ears, observing the behaviour of the horse under such circumstances.

The *points* of the horse have from time to time been the subject of poetry. For instance, Shakespeare in his "Venus and Adonis" writes—

"So did this horse excel a common one
In shape, in courage, colour, pace, and bones,
Round-hoofed, short-jointed, fetlocks shag and long.
Broad breast, full eyes, small head, and nostrils wide ;
High crest, short ears, straight legs, and passing strong.
Thin mane, thick tail, broad buttock, tender hide ;
Look what a horse should have he did not lack,
Save a proud rider on so proud a back."

Again, also we have from the pen of Whyte Melville—

“A head like a snake, and a skin like a mouse,
An eye like a woman, bright, gentle, and brown;
With loins and a back that would carry a house;
And quarters to lift him smack over a town.”

I shall commence this portion of my subject with the Head.

The *Fore-head* should be broad, the face tapering from the fore-head to the muzzle.

The *Ears* should be rather small than large, placed not too far apart, and should be erect and quick in motion. The stretching of the ears in contrary directions shows that he is attentive to everything that is taking place around him. It is said that when horses march in company by night, those in front direct their ears forward, those in the rear direct theirs backwards, and those in the centre laterally, the whole troop seem to be watchful for the general safety. The Ear is even more intelligible than the Eye, although they are as Tennyson says, “together twinned as horse’s ear and eye.” When the ears are laid back we may generally expect mischief, while a quick change in their position will distinguish between playfulness and vice.

The *Eye* of the horse will enable us with tolerable certainty to guess at his temper, under ordinary circumstances if much of the white is seen we may anticipate an equal amount of temper. The prominence of the eye certainly adds much to the beauty of the animal, but it must be remembered that a too great projection, or a too flat condition of the eye are equally undesirable, in the former condition the rays of light are rendered too convergent, and in the latter are not convergent enough; in either case the horse may unpleasantly start, or suddenly and dangerously turn round. The eye should in all cases be perfectly transparent.

The *Nose*. If the profile of the face is straight there is usually neither an excess of good or of bad temper; should the nose be of the Roman type then you may expect a good-tempered horse, but not one overwilling to work; on

the other hand, a depression across the centre of the nose, although a sign of good breeding is often also suggestive of a vicious disposition. The nostrils should be extended, for such extension is intimately connected with breeding, courage, and speed.

“The noble horse
That, in his fiery youth, from his wide nostrils
Neighed courage to his rider.....”

Massinger.

It is said that the Icelanders slit the nostrils, this is unnecessary, Nature has made provision in the horse for even extraordinary exertion. It is by his unfailing sense of smell that the horse wanders about the meadows and is at once able to distinguish between the useful and deleterious herbs which form his provender. It is also on account of the highly sensitive state of the nostrils, which are very amply supplied with nerves, that the *Twitch* forms such a useful sedative.

The *Mouth*, like the nostrils, should be large, and the lips should be soft and compressed. I have described the Teeth in my Horse-Shoeing and Horse-Feeding Sketch, so shall not refer to them here. In concluding the Head I should mention that the channel or space between the lower jaw should be broad, width in this position allows for the varied movements necessary for the offices of respiration.

The *Neck* cannot well be too light and long for riding purposes, if it is short and thick in the throat the head will never *bend* to the bit. For draught purposes a short and powerful neck is desirable, for the muscles are employed to advance the fore limbs. The neck of a well-formed horse, however fine at the top, should be muscular at the bottom, otherwise the neck is what is termed *loose*. Horses with ewe-necks very often have also light mouths, and it has been well said that no one could suffer much greater misery than to gallop down hill on a ewe-necked horse with one foot out of the stirrup and a fly in your eye.

The *Chest* should be broad and deep, the main object is to find that chest which in a quiescent state possesses considerable capacity, and which is capable of being

increased in capacity to meet the demand when the animal requires it.

The *Shoulder*. A well-known character in being taken round the Stables suggested that such and such a horse had a very *peculiar* shoulder, to which came the reply that this particular horse happened to have a *perfect* shoulder, "yes!" rejoined Butterwick, "that is the peculiarity." It certainly is remarkable what a number of horses we see with indifferent shoulders. The shoulder should be long and oblique, this is absolutely essential for riding purposes, but to horses of slow draught an upright shoulder is rather an advantage, because its additional thickness gives them additional weight to throw into the collar. Horses which possess a distinct hollow behind the top of the shoulder blade, the blade itself standing nearly upright, should be rejected for all purposes.

The *Back*. For riding purposes the back should be short and broad, a moderately long back is not objectionable in draught horses provided the quarters are muscular; but it is a fatal defect in saddle horses, for they cannot carry weight, and the defect increases with age. Horses with *roach* backs are very liable to be *galled* by the saddle.

The *Girth*. The circumference of the girth cannot be too great.

The *Loins* can scarcely be too broad and muscular, horses which possess a distinct *dip* in the loins shew that they are weak in the union of the back and loins.

The *Withers* should be high, because then they afford a larger surface for the attachment of the muscles of the back.

The *Arm* should be large and muscular. A full and swelling fore-arm is the characteristic of every thoroughbred horse. The arm of the Race horse should be long, and in the Cavalry horse also, for the Order is, that high action is not necessary in the trooper.

The *Leg*, that is, that portion of the limb between the knee and the fetlock, and in a good horse's leg you should distinctly be able to see the *bone*, the *suspensory ligament*,

and still more posteriorly the *flexor tendons*, viz., the *perforans* and *perforatus*. Thickening of these tendons shows that the horse has been sprained, and although free from lameness at the time of inspection, may nevertheless, fall lame at the close of the first hard day's work.

The *Pasterns*. For riding purposes the pasterns should be moderately long, but if they are very long and thin the fetlock will be weak and cannot sustain the weight; on the other hand, short thick pasterns, if not too upright, are not objectionable for draught horses.

The *Quarters* should be broad, and the upper thighs should stand out clearly developed.

The *Hind Legs*. On no account should the hind legs be crooked or stand out a long way behind, with these defects are usually found a long back and curby hocks. The leg from the point of the hock to the fetlock should be nearly perpendicular.

I have purposely avoided giving any description of the *Hock*, as it would be difficult for the Reader to appreciate the difference between sound hocks, rough hocks, spavined, curby, and hocks tied in below, from a description on paper. Such matters are only understood by careful reading of suitable professional books, combined with repeated and continuous practical observation and digital manipulation. I have also omitted any account of the Foot, the reason being that I gave a description of that important structure in my *Horse-Shoes and Horse-Shoeing*.





CHAPTER III.

Stables.

IT has been observed that nothing can be a greater proof of the high rank which the horse holds in the affection and esteem of man than those magnificent, as well as comfortable dwellings, which, in all times he has been at the pains and expense to erect for the use and gratification of his favourite. The most suitable place for a horse is, if possible, a Loose Box, he is then able to take some exercise, however little, and escape those diseases which seize horses kept tied up in stalls, even after a very few days of idleness. In most stables the first error to be noticed is in the *Floor*, which usually slopes backwards from the manger, thus causing the horse to stand for hours in a most unnatural position. In a state of nature the horse always stands with his hind feet on the higher ground, and this he does to remove the tension on the back tendons. In order to prevent accidents caused by horses slipping on the pavement of stables, the stalls should be sprinkled with sand, or a little straw, when the horses are not littered down. As regards Litter, a horse should

be allowed a good bed of wheat straw, and so often as it is beginning to decay it should be removed. The Stable should at all times be beautifully sweet. George Eliot says, "The scent of the stable, in a natural state of things, ought to be among the soothing influences of a man's life." Stables should be *well ventilated*, but great care must be taken to avoid draughts. There should be plenty of *Light*, but the light must not be too glaring, such as would occur in stables with white-washed walls, and large windows through which the sun too powerfully penetrates; such must be very trying to the eyes of a horse. Again, the stable must not be too dark, for anyone can easily understand what must be the effect upon the eye of a horse, which, after standing for hours in a dark stable is suddenly brought out into the bright light of a noon-day sun.

The *Temperature* of the stable must be observed. The horse is very susceptible of sudden changes of temperature, therefore, stables should not be kept too hot, especially when horses are required to leave their stables and enter the cold external air several times during the day. Nothing is more liable to produce a morbid condition of the respiratory apparatus than sudden alternations of temperature, such, for instance, as Bronchitis, and in treating such a disease as the above mentioned, one of the first cares must be the temperature of the stable, which should be about 60° F., because the mucous membrane is very sensitive.

The *Hay-racks* in most stables are placed high up, the horse is compelled to raise his head in order to draw the hay from the rack, and in doing this it often happens that hay seeds fall into the eye, and thereby cause considerable inflammation. The manger and rack should be low down. The natural position for a horse whilst feeding is to bend the head. As I said before, in a state of nature the food lies principally upon the ground, and the head of the horse must be lowered to get at it. The ligament which supports the head of the horse when he is in a state of rest, is elastic, it will yield to a force impressed upon it, and will resume its natural dimensions when that force is removed. When

the animal has satisfied himself the depressing muscles cease to act, and other muscles which are designed to assist in raising the head begin to exert themselves, and by their aid and the inherent elasticity of the ligament, the head is again elevated and remains so without the slightest exertion of muscular power.

As regards the *watering* of horses in the stable, it is a well-known fact that horses having water constantly attainable, will drink less, and are not so likely to overfill themselves as those watered at set hours. And in modern stables there should be a suitable receptacle in the manger for the water, which by means of taps, etc., can be changed during the day.

“Let a horse drink when he will, not what he will.”

With respect to Cart Stables, one matter of great importance is that horses may never be fed together in such way, that the strongest, or most spirited may monopolize the food, or at least cull the best of it, which he assuredly will do. The only preventatives are either a partition or absolute confinement of the heads of the master beasts.

In all classes of stables care should be taken that the ceiling is high enough, and that a horse 16 hands is not put into a stable built for one 13 hands, otherwise he will knock his head on the ceiling, and an abscess on the Poll will be the result. And again, the door should be sufficiently wide for the horse to pass conveniently in and out. If it is not the haunch strikes the door post, and the horse with his retentive memory is ever after afraid to pass through an entrance. It remains now for me to thank the Reader for having done me the honour of perusing this short pamphlet, and to hope that he may have found something he did not before know, or even if knowing everything written herein, that he may have had the subject refreshed in his mind.



A SKETCH ON ANCIENT AND MODERN HORSE-SHOES
AND HORSE-SHOEING, together with a short description
of HORSE-FOODS AND HORSE-FEEDING. Price
Sixpence.

OPINIONS OF THE PRESS.

The Bedfordshire Standard, says, "A Sketch on Ancient and Modern Horse-Shoes and Horse-Shoeing, together with a short description of Horse-Foods and Horse-Feeding, by Frederick Moody, M.R.C.V.S., is also worthy of similar praise. Here we have a critical examination of the various systems of Horse-Shoeing that have lately engaged the attention of the riding and driving world, by one who is evidently well qualified for the task, together with practical hints of the utmost value to horsemen, not only on this subject but as to the proper care and management of our four-footed friends. The Author (Veterinary Lieutenant Royal East Kent Yeomanry Cavalry) is now resident in Bedford, and the pamphlet is issued by Hulatt & Richardson, at the modest price of 6d."

The Luton Times, says, "Horse-Shoes and Horse-Shoeing (Ancient and Modern).—We have received an admirably written treatise on this subject by Frederick Moody, M.R.C.V.S., (Veterinary Lieutenant Royal East Kent Yeomanry Cavalry). The first part appears to be of a somewhat historical character, relating the origin of blacksmiths and farriers, and describes how horses were shod in olden times. The nature and construction of the hoof is commented on, and there is a disquisition on modern horse-shoes and the operation of shoeing. The concluding part is devoted to the feeding of the horse,—which to quote the Author—is the most important part of stable management, and upon it the comfort of the animal and its utility to man are immensely dependant. The little book is full of information, and should prove useful and interesting to lovers of horses."

